

THE
WAR AND ITS CLOSE.

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN CENTENARY CHURCH, RICHMOND, VA.,
FRIDAY, APRIL 8TH, 1864,

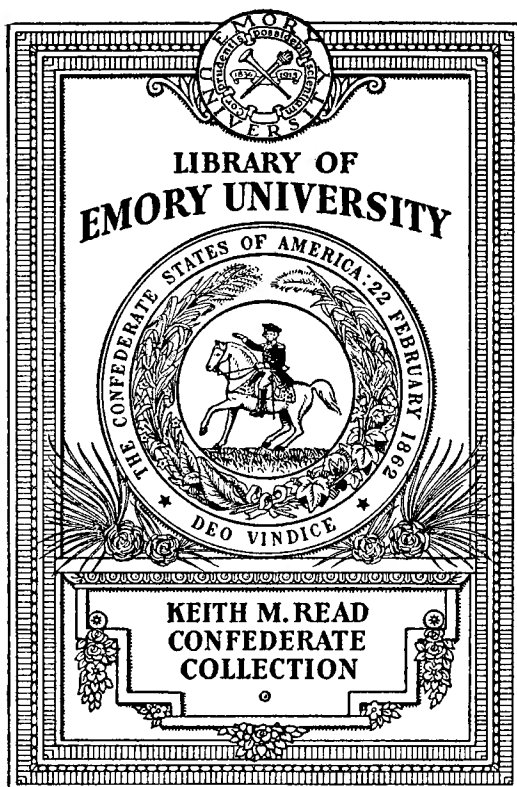
BY REV. D. S. DOGGETT, D.D., PASTOR,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

NATIONAL FAST.

Published by the Soldiers' Tract Association, M. E. Church, South.

RICHMOND:
MACFARLANE & FERGUSON,
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## DEDICATION.

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TO THE CENTENARY CONGREGATION,

the following discourse is affectionately inscribed, by their Pastor, as a tribute for their generous regards to him, and as an expression of his views on the momentous issues in which Church and State are equally involved. It is published by the request of some who heard it, and it is offered, through them, to the public, with the hope that, into whose hands soever it may fall, whether citizen or soldier, it may be a witness to truth, an incentive to duty, and a stimulant to hope, in the present stage of our country's fortunes.



## DISCOURSE.

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From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members? Ye lust and have not: ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.—JAMES iv. 1-3. .

Whilst this passage refers, in all probability, to the prevalence of intestine broils amongst the dispersed Israelites, it justifies, by its general tone, the discussion of that subject to which I invite your devout attention, on this solemn occasion: *The moral and religious aspects of the present war, and the probable period of its termination.* Other views, however just and proper, would be incompatible with the character and design of the Christian pulpit, and with the sacred services assigned to this day. In presenting this subject to your consideration, we are discharging, as we conceive, a duty imposed by the times, and are strengthening the hands of all true patriots. Ministers of the Gospel, in the performance of their holy functions, have no right to enter into the arena of political strife, and to fan the flame of animosity, by animadversions upon, and denunciations of the men and the measures of government. They must leave that course to others, whose secular vocations allow them the liberty of, at least, a can-



did criticism. Confining themselves to their legitimate sphere, I am, nevertheless, persuaded, that they are capable of accomplishing a vast amount of good to the common cause of the country, as well as to the direct object of their mission. Such a motive, I trust, actuates me, at the present hour; and I shall attempt, according to my best ability, to realize it. Let us, then, contemplate,

I. THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT WAR. It is eminently characterized by these; and they afford such an insight into it, as materially to aid us in arriving at correct conceptions of those elements which give it intensity, determine its responsibilities, and foreshadow its issues. Following the indications of the text, I remark, with no wish to misrepresent or exaggerate,

1. That this war receives its moral complexion, to a great extent, from the passions which instigated it; from the unhallowed lusts by which it was precipitated upon us, as they appear to us. There was no necessity for its inauguration, on any principle of truth and justice. According to a self-evident maxim, recognized by the word of God, acknowledged by the civilized world, and embodied in the Declaration of Independence of the United States, all nations are entitled to their own forms of government, since they alone are the judges and the subjects of those forms which suit them; and are responsible to no being but God, for their political constitutions. This inalienable right was boldly asserted by the Confederate States of America before the outbreak of hostilities. It was resisted by an armed force; and a bloody war, of three years' duration, has been the fearful consequence. This resistance was the product of the passions of our enemies; not of their reason, nor of their rights; for of neither is there the shadow of a pretext. Its polluted fountain was "the lusts that war" in their members; those ignominious passions which they had long fostered, and which seized the first ostensible opportunity to display their malignity.

These passions were disguised under a fiction, which was once a reality, but which ceased forever when the decisive step was taken. It was the fiction of "The Union." "The Union" be-

came, from that moment, a fiction, and a covert for those fierce and disastrous elements which constitute the *animus* of the war. The most conspicuous of them, we will briefly enumerate; *the lust of power*; the desire and the purpose to control, according to their standard of prerogative, the destinies of the whole country, as if they had obtained, by the special favor of God, the absolute right of property in the entire continent: *the lust of wealth*; the desire to appropriate, without equivalent, the vast resources of the South, to their personal and sectional advantage: *the passion of prejudice*, arising from envy at the superior social status which God, in his Providence, has so manifestly given to the population of the Southern States; *the passion of fanaticism*, taking its hue from false religious sentiments as to the condition of the African race amongst us; and *the passion of revenge*, for the obstinacy with which the people of the South have maintained their position; a revenge which has rioted in barbarities unexampled in civilized warfare. These are some of the passions which enter into the origin of this war, and which yet rage with unabated fury in the masses of our enemies, under the guise of "The Union;" a term which, by its former hallowed associations, still deceives the ignorant amongst them.

2. Another moral element displayed in this war, operates amongst ourselves. Although we maintain the incontestable right of self-government, it has been defaced and distorted by counter passions. Passion has excited passion by perpetual reaction, and imparted too much of a morbid feature to the national character, in the present struggle. I preach no Utopian system of national morals, when I say, that the exhibition of passion, on our part, is unnecessary and unjustifiable. Ours is a war of truth, of justice, of principle. It contains, in itself, motive power enough to stir all our energies, and stimulate all our exertions. Its inherent magnitude is sufficient to inspire the national mind with the grandeur and the calmness of an unconquerable purpose. Paroxysms of passion add nothing to the dignity or the success of a great cause. They impair and mar its proportions. The heat of anger and the desire for personal vengeance, have in reality, nothing to do with the grand contest in which

we are engaged. If official retaliation for public wrongs be considered imperative, let it be administered for the public good, and not dictated by the caprice of public passion. It is no paradox to affirm, that battles have been and may be fought exclusively from that elevated Christian heroism which takes its color from the sanctity of those interests involved in them. Let the public mind exorcise its passions, and prosecute the war upon its convictions. Let us leave to our enemies, the foul and fiery weapons of distempered zeal; and our strength will be in proportion to the majesty of our purposes.

3. This war, on the part of our enemies, involves, in my judgment, one of the most stupendous of all issues; a direct antagonism with the authority of Divine Revelation. It proceeds upon the assumption, that the institution of domestic slavery, in the South, is contrary to the will of God; that it is an oppression and an injustice to a part of the human family, and that it is the duty of the Government of the United States to extinguish it by force of arms. This assumption is positively contradicted by the Holy Scriptures. On no human institution have they spoken more explicitly, both in the Old and New Testaments, and on none have they left more unequivocally the seal of their approbation. Their import cannot be mistaken, nor can it be overthrown by any legitimate exegesis known to scholars. Here, then, a fundamental question of religion is involved and avowed in the prosecution of this war. It involves the teachings of God's word, on a specific point; and it involves, by necessary consequence, the integrity of Divine Revelation, as a whole. For, if the Bible be false in so remarkable an instance, it would raise the question whether it be not false in every other instance; and raise it so obviously, that success, on the part of our enemies, would be construed, by thousands of them, already too ripe for such a conclusion, as a virtual abrogation of the inspired volume. Say what we may, this very issue is pending in the present contest. It is a war of real, if not of outright infidelity; and it is sustained by the legion-headed hydra of Northern skepticism.

4. Another fact which arrests our attention, is the vices to

which the war has given developement and prominence amongst ourselves. A state of war is usually the hot-bed of vice. It has been so, in a fearful degree, with us. Rare examples of religion and virtue, as well as of patriotism, have shed their lustre upon our country, within the last three years. Yet the growth of vice has been enormous; enough, one would think, to sink any country into political perdition. The catalogue is too long and too revolting to be repeated. To make the statement good, I need only recur, at the outset, to the increased public and private violation of a law established by God, at the creation, and re-enacted, with the most imposing solemnities, in the Decalogue; a law of universal life and order, founded in the very constitution of man and of animals; the law of the Sabbath; the law of nations, as of individuals: a law which, by Divine exposition, allows of only two exceptions in its operations; absolute necessity, on the one hand, and absolute benevolence, on the other. These exceptions cover all the emergencies of governments and subjects which could arise on that day, and retain the residue as a test of allegiance to that august Sovereign upon whose will all destinies are suspended. One day out of seven, has he reserved to himself, in peace and in war, unless the exigency override the observance. Then, and then only, does Divine Benevolence seem to relax the exaction, and permit its apparent violation. Since the commencement of the war, and without any such exigency, it must be confessed that the law of the Sabbath has been often flagrantly violated both by the Government and the people. And no wonder that God maintains, so long, his controversy with us.

I refer, likewise, to the open and unblushing profanity, which, like a flood, has overflowed the land. Officers and privates, soldiers and civilians, legislators and citizens, high and low, have conspired, as it were, to blaspheme the name of God, and to exhaust the prolific vocabulary of unearthly imprecations, with a flippancy and a boldness that fill the Christian mind with horror. The country is burdened with this presumptuous sin, and God demands its reformation.

The vice of avarice claims, here, our animadversion. At all

times degrading, it is peculiarly odious when the resources of the entire country are required to sustain the struggle through which we are now passing. The description which Milton gives of Mammon, is perfectly characteristic of the whole tribe of his worshippers, so marvellously multiplied by the chances of the war ;

“ Mammon led them on,  
Mammon, the least-erected spirit that fell  
From heaven: for even in heaven, his looks and thoughts  
Were always downward bent; admiring more  
The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,  
Than aught divine or holy else, enjoyed  
In vision beatific.”

The poverty, inflicted by the vicissitudes of the war, and the self-denial requisite to supply the army with the necessities of life, demand a degree of self-sacrificing liberality hitherto unknown in our annals. That these conditions should have furnished the occasion for the accumulation of fortunes; that they should have been seized as opportunities of fraud and oppression, incredible as it is, we are obliged to believe, upon the testimony of our senses. Huge estates have been acquired, within the space of one and two years; in many instances, by those whom the war found in the shades and the shackles of insolvency. Forgetful or reckless of the throes and agonies of a cause in the very crisis of its existence, thousands, instead of standing shoulder to shoulder, in the unequal strife, discovered the chance to strike, not for their altars and their firesides, but for money. It has been to them the hey-day of enterprize and success in business; and every phase of the market has been watched with eagerness, to increase their gains, whether the country be saved or lost. Such a developement of avarice, by the very means which should have crushed it, the world has, perhaps, never witnessed. Such monsters as moral sharks, vultures, and vampires, have flourished upon the ruin of the land. While the public enemy are seeking to devour the extremities, they are devouring the vitals of the Confederate body; and, if nothing should be left but the skeleton, they will first have gorged them-

selves with its blood. Ill-omened creatures! They haunt our thoroughfares; they scent the carrion from afar, and collect to make a carnival upon the ebbing life of a nation in the convulsions of a death-struggle. What care they, if their fangs tear open even the corpse, and their appetite be glutted with the marrow of their murdered victim?

Another vice, rendered notorious by the war, is drunkenness. None is more terribly denounced by the Word of God, and none is more destructive of private and public virtue. Although it has always existed amongst us, I think it cannot be doubted, that it has rapidly increased since the commencement of our struggle, notwithstanding the restricted means of its indulgence, and the enhanced motives for its suppression. At every hazard of its detection, and every damage to the country, the dispensatories of liquid poison have multiplied throughout the land. Vile miscreants, traitors to their God and their country, skulking from duty behind darkened doors and painted windows, are dealing out potations of death to their miserable victims, clutching their felonious profits, and killing their fellow-men, perfectly indifferent who wins the prize of battle. Seduced by their ingenious facilities of temptation, thousands fall an easy prey to these insatiable harpies, losing, at one swoop, their money and their morals. And be it remembered, that this blow falls exactly where it can be least tolerated; upon our army, upon whose moral and physical vigor, under God, rests the hope of present and future generations. Exposure and battle surely suffice to decimate our ranks. Shall drunkenness add to the number of the slain? O, it is a melancholy sight, to see men whose position, as soldiers and officers, in this war, inspires us with reverence for their character, captured by an insidious foe in our midst, swaggering in our streets, muttering the incoherent jargon of idiots, and uttering the horrid blasphemies of lost spirits. Are these the men to fight our battles? And to what eternal infamy must those sink, who post themselves by the wayside to put to their mouths the cup of ruin!

Another vicious phenomenon, to which this war has given unusual growth, is the passion for public amusement. Incon-

sistent, under all circumstances, with moral obligation, and subversive of public welfare, it is peculiarly incompatible with a state of war threatening to upturn the very foundations of society. A degree of gravity, not to say, of religion, demands a due appreciation of the perils of the hour, when even the innocent pleasures of social life are checked by the sad vicissitudes of war. To surrender one's self to scenes of hilarity and mirth, at such a time, indicates an insensibility to the proximity and to the issues of the crisis. It is a species of madness, and an omen of ill, in proportion to the extent of the indulgence. A solemn cause requires a serious and an earnest people. Sports and pastimes may be allowed to children, on such occasions, but men and women, in whose ears the tempest of war is bursting, whose sires, whose sons, and whose countrymen, are falling at every discharge, and whose country will rise or fall with its close, must labor under a fatal infatuation, who can allow themselves the pleasures of theatres and balls, of feasting and revelry. The recorded example of the fall of Babylon, while Belshazzar was entertaining his courtiers with a sumptuous festival, startles the imagination with the frightful picture of the contemporary contrast; and utters a note of warning to the giddy devotees of fashionable enjoyments, while merciless armies are encircling the citadel of their hopes.

5. One of the issues involved in this war, is the purity of the religious faith of the nation; the infection and corruption of the public mind, as to the doctrines of the Bible. The seeds of all sorts of religious heresy are scattered broadcast over the North. With honorable exceptions, its heterogeneous population is a seething mass of diverse and conflicting theories on the subject of religion, imported from all parts of the world, augmented by the perpetual influx of emigration from the dregs of European society, and threatening to confound amongst them, in one indiscriminate miscellany, the orthodox creed of Christendom. It is a memorable fact, that these pestilential errors have never infected, to any material extent, the people of the South. A homogeneous race, and averse to novelties in religion and politics, they have betrayed but few affinities for new-fangled theories in either.

The Bible is received by them as the authority and standard of the truth, and the original churches retain, unaltered, the sacred symbols of their faith, unencumbered by speculation or heresy, and unassailed by the prurience of infidelity. Behold the historical contrast! For this integrity of the truth, we are also at war. If our enemies succeed, the barriers will be broken down, the floodgates will be raised, and the torrent of multifarious error will roll its desolating surge over the heritage of God. If we succeed, we shall hold, unimpaired, the noblest of all trusts, "the faith once delivered to the saints;" and Christianity, in the simplicity of her creed, will maintain her asylum, at least for a while, on Southern soil.

6. A corresponding issue involved in the war, is the freedom of public worship. That freedom is the guarantee of the Bible, and the coveted boon of civil independence. Its security has cost millions of lives and rivers of blood. Its safety is now imperiled. The alarming fact stares us in the face. Victory, against us, will close our churches, imprison our ministers, and scatter our members; or open them, either under the surveillance of provost marshals, or to the ecclesiastic emissaries of Northern fanaticism; of which we have instructive examples in the condition of the churches in New Orleans and Norfolk. Churches, as favorable as those of the South, to the Confederate Government, could never be permitted to survive; especially, since, one by one, they all took their stand on the platform of the Word of God, against the monstrous perversion of their former associates. At one fell stroke, religious liberty would be extinguished, and a ruthless tyranny would dictate terms of communion with the polluted crusaders of their altars. I mourn at the thought! I deprecate that event as a curse to the Christian world! Let us not delude ourselves. This very issue is involved in this war, with absolute certainty. The inalienable right of freedom of conscience lives or dies, as this war shall end. If it die, abolitionism will install itself within its darkened cathedral, and issue its decrees on pain of excommunication.

7. A monitory moral symptom of this war, on the part of our enemies, is their attempted inversion of, what we have every



reason to believe to be, the social order of Divine Providence; the relation between the master and the slave. This relation, as we have said, has the sanction of Divine Revelation. It has, besides, the sanction of Divine Providence, not only in its permission, but in its beneficial results to the slave. Civilization and Christianization have been its inseparable concomitants; neither of which has ever been effected upon the African race, on so large a scale, by the most strenuous exertions, for eighteen centuries, either by emancipation, colonization, or by missions. Mysterious as it is, the fact is unquestionable. The school of the African has been the slavery of the South; and will be, as long as God permits. The myrmidons of the Northern Government propose the immediate dissolution of this Providential relation. Fired with a wild and infuriate zeal to break down Southern freedom, they propose to invade and break down the order of God himself. The frenzied idea of setting, as it were, the universe to rights, at the risk of overturning it, has inflamed their imaginations. The fascinating picture has taken shape in their councils, and the African of the South has become the idol of the hour. Their armies are embellished with the attractive color; their citizenship is diversified with its envied variety; and amalgamation has been inaugurated as the perfection of philosophical combination, and the cream of poetic sentimentality. Nature and nature's God protest against the bold interference with the established order of human society; and the result will demonstrate the insanity of the undertaking.

8. Once more: A pleasing aspect of this war, on our side, is the active piety which prevails in our army. In what proportion to the whole, it exists, it is impossible to say. That it is genuine, and that it is extensive, admits not of a doubt. It is the most extraordinary instance, of the kind, on record. In the midst of hospitals, camps, marches, and battles, it has steadily increased, until many of the most devout Christians of the land are numbered amongst our soldiers. Many of our commanding Generals and subordinate officers are open professors of religion, and are consistent members of the church of Christ. So great has been the success of the gospel, in the rank and file of the army, that

it has become a question whether there be not more piety in the field than at home. What a wonderful phenomenon in the history of Christianity! Our army, to-day, may be called, a church in the wilderness; a church, in whose centre abides the Shekinah, and on whose front towers the pillar of fire; a church, we hope, fulfilling its destiny, and accomplishing its journey to the Canaan of a permanent national repose. It is reported, that in one of the Roman armies, there was a legion composed of Christians. It obtained the designation of the "Thundering Legion," because of the mysterious power which attended its arms. May we not hope, that a thousand thundering legions, under the banner of the cross, as well as under the banner of the Confederacy, along our extended line, will, when the hour of conflict arrives, do honor to both.

Having consumed so much time in reviewing the moral and religious aspects of the present war, I shall proceed to offer some remarks upon,

II. THE PROBABLE PERIOD OF ITS TERMINATION; a topic of profound interest, thrusting itself, with every day's recurrence, more forcibly upon our attention; and I think, I may, with the strictest propriety, introduce its consideration into this discourse. I observe,

1. That no war can be interminable. It must end at some time or another, either by compromise, by mediation, or by victory.

2. The present war will also end, in the course of time. I may venture to say, that it will never end by compromise. Its absolute antagonism precludes the possibility. The Rubicon is forever passed, and independence or subjugation trembles in the balances that weigh the destinies of nations. We are to survive or perish as the scales rise or fall. It will end by victory, or by mediation. Mediation, however, has become, with us, an exploded idea. It may be employed, but its oft repeated delusions have ceased to tempt the national expectation. How thoroughly has the hope of foreign intervention been expurgated from the public mind! The discipline of war has taught us, at least, this salutary lesson; that the problem of our independence must,

under God, be solved by ourselves alone; that in working out our destiny, the hope of the sympathy and support of European governments, is the idlest of all dreams that ever cheated the imagination of man. It has produced, too, the unwelcome conviction, that the honor and magnanimity of alleged neutral powers, is nothing more than a question of selfishness; and that the boasted law of nations is, little more than a standard of mutual convenience. To our apprehension, nothing remains to these Confederate States, but the stern realities of war, and the blessing of God upon our arms.

3. The end of the war is certainly approaching. The term of its duration has already been abridged by the space of three years. Three years less of its horrors are to be endured. Three years of heroic prowess, of blood and carnage, and of successful resistance, have now been chronicled on the page of universal history. Their memorial has been inscribed on the column of our national fame; a column which would remain in fadeless grandeur, on the highway of generations, if the nation itself were to expire. It is a fact of no small import, and of no little consolation, that a war-storm of three years' duration, has neither wrecked nor dismantled the goodly ship of our fortunes; but that she stands firmly, with her bow to the blast, gradually making her way to the harbor.

4. It is the general impression that the period of the war is near its termination. I concur in this belief. I am aware of the fallacy of impressions, and of the danger of exciting unreal hopes on so grave a subject. Yet rational hopes ought not only to be entertained, but promoted by the Christian pulpit. Hope has relumed her lamp in the thickness of our gloom, and irradiates our future with the most pleasing anticipations. There are, in my judgment, strong grounds to hope, that this war will end soon. I leave to statesmen and to politicians the calculation of chances, from the relative strength and numbers of the contending parties, and from the finances and factions which threaten to dismember the Northern Government into fragments. I refer only to moral and religious grounds. Nor do I know of any prophetic symbols which indicate the close of hostilities. I am

not apt in such discoveries. The event may be prefigured in the Word of God, but the hieroglyphics will be deciphered only after its occurrence. I will be responsible for no predictions. I will only assign the reasons of the hopeful probability.

One of them is, the nature of the moral forces at work in this war. As it originated with them, so its duration should be measured by the character and degree of their operation. These forces are, on the one hand, the passions which instigate the war, and, on the other, the purpose which repels them. It is, as we have shown, a war of passion and of principle, embodied respectively in the contending parties, though physically unequal. It is the nature of passion, especially, in masses of men, when resisted, in approximate numbers, by the power of a serene and indomitable resolution, to be self-destructive. This process is effected either by exhaustion or recoil. A war conducted, not by depth of conviction, or purity of motive, but by sordid and malignant impulses, may for a time, be fierce and terrible; but disappointed repeatedly in its expectations, it must eventually waste its energies by the very force and frequency of its spasmodic efforts; while a war conducted upon the deliberate conviction of its rectitude, replenishes itself perpetually with new supplies of strength. Such I believe to be the relative proportion between the moral forces now enlisted in the war, and in it, I find one of the grounds of hope that it is rapidly reaching its termination. But where, in such circumstances, national exhaustion does not follow, a more fearful retribution inevitably will. The relentless elements will rebound. "The lusts that war" in hostile bosoms, will recoil, and destroy those who unsuccessfully strive to visit them upon others. God lets loose the deluge of human passion upon wicked nations, and causes them to punish themselves, by drinking the cup of astonishment which they offer their neighbors. Already, this direful effect is beginning to shew itself in signs that betoken the end. And happy will it be for our enemies, if a volcano of angry eruption do not roll a wave of fire throughout their dwellings, and bury or burn the guilty inhabitants.

Again, there are boundaries which God has assigned to nations

in aggressive wars, which they cannot pass; boundaries to their capacities and resources for conducting them. Masses are not omnipotent, thank God! They can go so far, and no farther. They reach their limit of reinforcement and subsistence, at last. The drain is enormous, and the excessive demand soon forestalls the needed supply. A check is thus fixed, in the nature of things, to the continuance of overwhelming demonstrations well withstood. Their pompous pretensions break down by sheer incapacity to sustain them. This limit is approached by our adversaries. They are now putting forth all their might for one grand onslaught, with no possibility of repeating it, on the same scale. The case is entirely different with a people like ourselves, acting on the defensive: The limit of our endurance is comparatively indefinite. Our expenditure of men and means is so far less, that we may render ourselves invincible either by the number of our foes, or the duration of the war; and availing ourselves of auspicious advantages, we may force the enemy to his last experiment.

The bootless contest waged, in this war, against the order of God for the good of the African race, by Northern fanatics, is another evidence of the coming miscarriage. Bootless of good it has been in every particular. It has been an unmixed evil, and an undisguised failure to that portion of the colored population which has fallen into their hands; while the institution of domestic slavery itself remains intact. Their proclamations and their promises of freedom and indemnity, are only so many lures to relapse and disintegration; to a deeper degradation and to ultimate extinction. Their philanthropy is a mockery and a snare. God has ulterior purposes with respect to that race, for which they are not yet prepared, and he does not intend that human violence shall defeat them. The blow has already signally missed the mark at which it was aimed. If I mistake not, the demonstration is about to be given to the world, that the curse entailed upon the posterity of Canaan, that they should be "servants of servants unto their brethren," shall not be revoked, until the lease shall have expired, according to the will of the Judge, and not by the caprice of self-constituted umpires.

The present concentration of the existing moral forces also indicates the proximity of the end. Hitherto they have been diffused over a wide surface, and have been undecisive in their conflict. There is every reason to believe that they are collecting themselves into a focus, and that the result will remain no longer doubtful. Unquestionably, more depends on the approaching encounter than on any that has preceded it. The preliminary movements portend the catastrophe. The gathering clouds are ominous of a clash of elements that will shake the earth and clear the heavens. Premonitory symptoms and strong presentiments point to the immediate future as "the beginning of the end."

Again, the culminating issues which hang upon the hour, are so tremendous as incalculably to intensify the mortal strife, and to hasten its conclusion. They cannot be postponed much longer. There is felt to be the pressure of national existence on both sides, in the present juncture of affairs. It imparts a momentum to the collision which can scarcely fail to shatter one of the opposing parties. That party will not be, in our apprehension, the Confederate States.

The progressive proofs of God's good providence, in our behalf, strengthen the conviction that the period of our deliverance is not remote. Step by step, have we been led through the bloody scenes of our national drama, by the most manifest interposition of his hand. The spontaneous acknowledgement has ascended from all classes of the people. It is accounted a Providential miracle full of evidence and of wonder, that "hitherto the Lord hath helped us." The series has been unbroken. Was it to deceive us? Have we been brought so far, only to be abandoned in the last stage of the journey; and to perish in the passage, as a monument of Divine delusion? Let us interpret the illustrated past as an index of the more illustrious future, while we go forth again under the same celestial guidance.

The united energies of the whole people of the South are an additional augury of good. They were never more united than now. Time and experience, common sufferings and common interests, have added compactness to their strength. With immaterial exceptions, we witness the sublime spectacle of an entire

population resolved, in the name of God, not to relinquish their altars or their homes, but with the blood of a national sacrifice; to retrieve their fortunes, or to perish together on the consecrated soil of their liberties. Is not the sacred league a pledge that the first alternative will crown their vows?

The remarkable degree of cheerful religious faith which inspires both the people and the army, augments our hope, that the war will soon end. Such a faith there assuredly is; a faith which prompts to action, and which, in proportion to its genuineness, invokes the power of God. Expectation of success has settled down into a calm and lively trust in the arm of Omnipotence; and in the use of subordinate agencies, awaits the decision of Him, "who speaks and it is done; who commands, and it stands fast forever."

Finally, the observances of this day increase our anticipations. To me, they are peculiarly impressive. Standing, to all appearance, on the verge of our destiny, burdened with the accumulated responsibilities of our position, we are again summoned to the throne of grace. Heretofore, the call has originated in the Executive mansion. Now it proceeds from the National Legislature. It is the voice of the Representatives of the people. It is the voice of the people themselves, through their Representatives. It is the expression of the popular will. The people, virtually, call themselves to prayer. Such is my interpretation; and this fact is fraught with great significance. I discern in it, that the heart of the people is right, on the great question of our success; and that, on this, more than on any former occasion, the homage is national; that self-conceived and self-imposed, a mighty offering of humiliation and prayer spreads itself to the notice and good pleasure of God. Justly obnoxious to the charge, that "we fight and war, yet we have not, because we ask not; and that we ask, and receive not, because we ask amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts;" may we not hope, that, this day, we shall ask aright; and that, whether we fight or not, as God may ordain, the avenging sword of war, which we have drawn in a righteous cause, may return to rest in its scabbard, wreathed with perennial flowers gathered from the fields of peace. Amen.







